



The Gift of a Healthy Marriage

BY NANCY DINERSTEIN, MA., LPC.

Do you know the very best gift you can give your child? Surprisingly it is neither a Zuzu Pet nor an X-Box 360 and not even an iPhone. The answer is plain and simple – it is the gift of a strong and healthy marriage.

If you and your partner kick your relationship to the back burner and subsequently forget to move it to the front grill, the flame will undeniably extinguish over time. Now is the time to rekindle it. Whether you are presently in a distressed situation, or if you are simply in a secure place but choose to make it even better, Valentines Day is an ideal opportunity for you and your spouse to think about how to add more seasoning and sizzle to your marriage.

Parents today over-work, over-stress and over-schedule themselves and their families. The countless demands in a hectic lifestyle are overwhelming and although this frenetic pace is a common dilemma, it is nevertheless quite disconcerting for most everyone. Regardless of how busy your daily routine might be, nurturing the partnership with your wife or husband absolutely needs to be an uppermost priority. Period. If you do not read any further, please re-read this last sentence.

Statistics state that 50% of marriages end in divorce and research repeatedly reports that divorce oftentimes causes emotional, psychological and financial distress in addition to a wide range of other problems for spouses and their children. Although I am sure this information is not new

to you, the key point is that giving time and paying attention to each other can be a realistic, opportune, and no-nonsense measure to prevent divorce. Unfortunately, many individuals find themselves in a devastating crisis as they wait too long before they remedy the problems in their marriage.

Putting sizzle back into a relationship in addition to maintaining it requires paramount consideration. Adults enter into matrimony and typically, things go along well for the first few years. The couple has children and the relationship changes, which some refer to as the “second” marriage. Whoever thinks it is feasible to shelve attentiveness to their marriage until a later date is mistaken, since the postponement may continue indefinitely. Furthermore, unacceptable interactions over time can persevere into permanent, dysfunctional behaviors.

Couples need to spend time together exclusively; and yes, without children. If this sounds selfish, think of it in the same manner as when on a plane, traveling with children and the flight attendant instructs adults to put on their oxygen mask first. The message conveys that the parent needs to come first, in order to survive to take care of his child. Similarly, the parent’s union needs to come first in order to be extremely resilient not only for themselves, but in addition to their children. A forceful combo is undoubtedly advantageous and effective for the emotional well-being of the entire family.

There are countless theories and abundant literature describing what a healthy marriage should and should not do in order to be successful. The reality is a marriage needs to be personally suitable for both people. Be aware of the variable needs of the other person in

addition to your own needs, and understand the importance of meeting these needs. If problems arise, regardless of their size or complexity, have the courage to face the issues before they become too difficult to repair. When necessary, seek professional assistance from an effective resource.

A thriving partnership has attributes which are neither complicated, nor a deep-seated mystery. However, putting these behaviors into action can oftentimes be particularly difficult. Utilizing common sense with your spouse can definitely contribute to a powerful collaboration.

The following key points are examples of essential ways to create and maintain a healthy, well-balanced relationship. These are simple, universal factors, which can provide a sturdy foundation to build and to maintain a passionate and thriving marriage.

- **Communicate:** It is impossible to be a partner with anyone without effective communication. Lack of communication is a critical and a prevalent problem, nevertheless entails solving. Make a date for coffee, for a walk or for a person-to-person chat anywhere. Have a date night on a regular basis! If texting and face book are the exclusive tools for communication they are not acceptable.

- **Obstacles:** Observe what obstacles prevent doing what is necessary to create a healthy team. Avoid any barriers and establish firm boundaries in order to avoid these common pitfalls.

- **Unite:** Remember the motto, "United we stand, Divided we fall." Couple = Partnership = Team

- **Prioritize:** Make your partnership a highest priority. Your children work and other aspects in your life will benefit from its durability. There will certainly be situations when this is difficult, but remember to prioritize and concentrate on your relationship as much and as often as possible.

- **Laugh, love, and like each other:** Laugh together, love together, like each other! Create pleasurable times together, and enjoy being together laughing, loving, and being each other's best friend. Have fun!

- **Respect, honor, and trust:** Says it all – Tiger should have read this.

- **Expressions:** Choose words carefully, expressing yourself in positive and loving ways. No one wants to be the recipient of constant criticism, sarcasm, nagging, or meanness, and especially from your spouse. (Think of the Golden Rule)

- **Appreciation:** Everyone deserves appreciation for his or her efforts. In addition, practice kindness and show support. A little gratitude goes a long way.

- **Compromise:** Give and take, find middle ground and meet halfway. Every long-term relationship will understand this concept.

- **Romance:** Remember the extra seasoning and sizzle? Romance and affection are always necessary ingredients. Every duo must create and maintain intimacy and intrigue.

Remember to light the fire, keep the flame glowing and never let it fade. Have a romantic and fun-filled Valentine's Day!

Nancy Dinerstein is a Houston psychotherapist in private practice providing counseling to individuals and couples. Additionally, she also conducts workshops and support groups. Her specialty is helping women with Postpartum Depression and Perinatal Mood Disorders. She and her childhood sweetheart, Jack, are celebrating over thirty years of marriage. Together they share a love of their family, snow skiing, biking, and baking homemade cupcakes. To reach her, email Nancysd17@gmail.com or check out her website at www.counselingwithNancyD.com. You can reach Nancy via phone at 713-529-0573 or 832-209-1222.



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